



THE SCOOP

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*** SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE'S INVESTMENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Monthly Director's Column

By Katie Smith, Director

Missouri Department of Agriculture

Much debate and media space has been dedicated to ethanol and food prices here in Missouri. Many consumers have become confused on what is right and what is wrong within the debate. However, recent attempts to eliminate the 10 percent ethanol standard in Missouri will have limited impact on the price of corn and could have long-term unintended consequences. Corn prices are determined by the global market, not a fuel standard for the state of Missouri.

As a consumer and a mother, I understand the burdens of high gasoline prices and rising food costs. However, ethanol adds renewable and domestically produced volume to our gasoline supply, while having a minimal impact on food prices and availability. In fact, the cost of energy to transport, process and package our foods affects food prices 2 to 3 times more than the price of corn.

Read more of the Director's Column.

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*** DEPARTMENT OF AG REMINDS OF HAY SCAMS**

The Missouri Department of Agriculture (MDA) is once again reminding hay producers across the state to be aware of potential hay scams where they can be cheated out of thousands of dollars.

In 2007, MDA became aware of several attempts of supposed interested hay buyers contacting Missouri producers for the sale of hay. In these overpayment scam cases, a producer makes an agreement with the scammer and receives a substantial check written for over the amount requested. The producer is then asked to wire transfer funds to a truck hauler who will supposedly pick up the bales of hay in the coming days. Once that payment is mailed to the hauler, the producer finds out days and sometimes weeks later that the original check from the scammer has not cleared taking them for thousands of dollars.

For more information or if you have been affected by this scam, contact Mark Murphy, marketing specialist, at (573) 751-7213 or Mark.Murphy@mda.mo.gov. To learn more about the Missouri Hay Directory, visit www.mda.mo.gov.

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*** LEARN MORE ABOUT "DOING BUSINESS WITH VIETNAM" AT A SEMINAR IN SPRINGFIELD AND COLUMBIA**

Don't miss the opportunity to explore the possibilities of doing business with Vietnam. The Missouri Department of Agriculture is coordinating two opportunities for Missouri businesses, seasoned exporters, new-to-export companies and anyone interested in learning more about Vietnam to attend a seminar to learn about Vietnam's growing economy.

On May 22, the "Doing Business in Vietnam" seminar will take place at the Plaster Student Union on the Missouri State University campus in Springfield and will include representatives from the Vietnamese Embassy in Washington, D.C., the Food Export Association's Chicago office and EXIM Bank's Chicago Office. Representatives from Clayton AgriMarketing, North Pacific Lumber and Pedro Pantoja, retired international executive, will also share their business experiences in the Vietnam market.

On May 23, the "Doing Business in Vietnam" seminar will be held at the University of Missouri - Columbia. Mr. Ngo, Mr. Liem and Mr. Do from the Vietnam Embassy in Washington and Mr. Hank Ma, director of Missouri's Trade Office in Taipei, will present information.

Between 2006 and 2007, Missouri's exports to Vietnam have increased 75 percent with chemicals leading in exports followed by processed foods and leather-related products. Food, leather, crop, and forestry products have cumulatively increased an astounding 139%.

Registration, including lunch, is \$35 per person. For more information about the seminar and a full list of speakers and schedule of events, visit www.mda.mo.gov or contact Shelley Haslag at (573) 751-4339 or Shelley.Haslag@mda.mo.gov.

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*** GOV. BLUNT HIGHLIGHTS EFFORTS TO THWART CATTLE RUSTLERS**

During a visit to Springfield in April, Gov. Matt Blunt highlighted the success of state efforts to protect Missouri farm families and thwart cattle rustlers.

In 2006, Gov. Blunt directed the Department of Public Safety to create the Cattle Theft Task Force and charged that group with investigating cattle theft in Missouri. The Cattle Theft Task Force coordinates efforts of the Missouri State Water Patrol and the Missouri State Highway Patrol, along with the Cooper, Miller, Polk, Greene, Christian and Pulaski County Sheriff's Departments. It also takes advantage of the Missouri Information Analysis Center (MIAC), a new cooperative tool created to offer around the clock data resources.

Since the creation of the Cattle Theft Task Force, 26 cattle-rustlers have been arrested and 126 head of cattle have been recovered. In addition several stolen vehicles and weapons have also been recovered.

[Read more here.](#)

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*** JONESBURG AGRIBUSINESS RECEIVES AWARD AT MEAT PROCESSORS CONVENTION**

AgriMissouri™ member, Davis Meat Processing LLC located in Jonesburg, Mo., recently received the Taste of Missouri and Best Beef Product awards at the 2008 Missouri Association of Meat Processors Convention. Both awards were given for their smoked beef product.

Joe and Cherilyn Davis began Davis Meat Processing over 20 years ago. As the business has grown, they have become known for their award winning cured and smoked hams, bacon, smoked pork chops, snack sticks, jerky, sausages and bratwurst. "We are a small, family-owned business that strives to provide the quality products desired by consumers and customers," said Joe Davis. In 2005, the Davis' became the first couple to be inducted into the Missouri Association of Meat Processors Hall of Fame.

For more information regarding Davis Meat Processing, visit www.davismeat.com. To learn more about agribusinesses across the state, visit www.agrimissouri.com.

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*** A CELEBRATION OF ROOTS PROVES SUCCESSFUL FOR WEBB CITY FARMERS' MARKET**

Each year, Missouri communities offer consumers 135 farmers' markets across the state. These markets support locally grown products and agricultural diversity, provide fresh produce to consumers and enhance local economies. Promoting the importance of agriculture to their community, the Webb City Farmers' Market took home the Best Event of the Year award at the Missouri Farmers' Market Association Annual Meeting. The Missouri Farmers' Market Association and AgriMissouri™ sponsor the awards. The Webb City Farmers' Market received recognition for their Market Roots Celebration, which celebrates the heritage of vendors, volunteers, customers and the market foods.

This year's Market Roots Celebration at the Webb City Farmers' Market is scheduled for June 10. The Webb City market opened for the season on Fri., April 25 and will be open Tuesdays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. through October. The market will also be open on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in June and July.

For more information regarding the Webb City Farmers' Market, contact Eileen Nichols, market manager, at (417) 673-5866 or visit www.localharvest.org/farmers-markets/M3615.

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*** EXPO OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR MISSOURI AGRIBUSINESSES TO EXPAND**

Missouri companies headed to Chicago on April 27-29 for the U.S. Food Export Showcase and All Things Organic Trade Show at the McCormick Place. These companies had the opportunity to display their products under the Missouri Pavilion sponsored by the Missouri Department of Agriculture's Ag Business Development Division and AgriMissouri™. For the first time, the U.S. Food Export Showcase combined with The Fancy Food Show and All Things Organic becoming the Global Food & Style Expo. This new event created the largest display of specialty, ethnic, natural, organic and American ready-to-export products in the U.S.

To read more about what companies attended, visit [here](http://www.globalfoodandstyleexpo.com) or visit www.globalfoodandstyleexpo.com. For more information about AgriMissouri™, visit www.agrimissouri.com. To learn more on organic products in Missouri, visit www.missouriorganics.blogspot.com.

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*** GOV. BLUNT, DIRECTOR OF AG VISIT HENDRICKSON'S IN ST. CHARLES**

On April 11, Gov. Matt Blunt visited a St. Charles agribusiness as part of his designation of the city as Capital for a Day. Joined by Director of Agriculture Katie Smith, Gov. Blunt toured

Hendrickson's Inc., a family-owned salad dressing company and met with Mike Schinker, general manager of Hendrickson's Inc.

Hendrickson's Salad Dressing and seasoning has been fat-free since its introduction in 1968 and contains all natural ingredients. Annually, Hendrickson's ships over 100,000 cases of product to retail stores across the nation.

Hendrickson's Inc. is a member of AgriMissouri™, a program of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, dedicated to providing marketing assistance and opportunities to Missouri food manufactures, farmers, producers, agritourism businesses and farmers' markets.

For more information about Hendrickson's Inc., visit www.hendricksons.com.

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*** SEMINAR AT UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI TO FOCUS ON TURNING WASTE INTO A RESOURCE**

Opportunities for turning manure into sources of revenue will be the focus of the 2008 Breimyer Seminar "Manure Entrepreneurs: Turning Brown to Green" held in Columbia on May 22 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the University of Missouri campus. Entrepreneurs are taking advantage of economic, cultural and environmental changes in the U.S. to transform what was once called a waste into what is now recognized as a resource. There are a number of factors that make manure an increasingly valuable resource.

The seminar will honor the memory of Dr. Charlie Fulhage who was a manure expert and early proponent of methane from manure. The registration fee for the seminar is \$25, which includes lunch and parking. Deadline for registration is May 16th. To register call Joyce White in the MU Agricultural Economics Department at (573) 882-6533 or e-mail whitej@missouri.edu.

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*** GROW NATIVE! LAUNCHES NEW CONTAINER CONTEST**

Grow Native!, a joint program of the Missouri Department of Agriculture and Missouri Department of Conservation, has launched the Grow Native! Container Garden Contest. Catch the container craze and plant a native plant container garden. There will be three winners selected and great prizes will be awarded. For more information visit www.grownative.org and click on workshops and events, or e-mail grownative@mda.mo.gov.

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*** GOV. BLUNT MAKES APPOINTMENT TO AGRICULTURAL BOARD**

Gov. Matt Blunt made the following appointment to an agricultural board in April:

Missouri Alternative Fuels Commission

Michael D. Geske (R), 56 of Matthews, is a self-employed farm owner. Mr. Geske currently serves on the Missouri Governors Ethanol and Other Renewable Fuels Commission and is the president of the Missouri Corn Growers Association. His appointment is subject to Senate confirmation for a term ending on March 25, 2012.

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*** GIVE MISSOURI A TRY – Special featured offered by AgriMissouri™**

Alewel's– Generations of Great Country Meats

Many fair goers have become acquainted with Alewel's Country Meats over the years in the Ag Building at the Missouri State Fair - positioned in front where you can purchase meat sticks and country ham biscuits. Like many AgriMissouri™ businesses, Alewel's Country Meats is family-owned and continues to have multiple generations working in the business.

On April 2, three generations of the Alewel family were featured in an article on digitalburg.com. The article titled, "Three generations of Alewel's keep the family-owned butcher shop thriving" describes how the three generations work towards a business that provides meats, retail goods and catering services. Read the full article and learn more about the Alewel's Country Meats business and their family involvement. According to digitalburg.com, "Alewel's Country Meats was established in Warrensburg in the early 1970s, and sells the 'down-home stuff you can't get at a grocery store.'

To find more information on AgriMissouri™ members, visit www.agrimissouri.com or hear from members on the AgriMissouri™ Showcase at www.agrimissourishowcase.com.

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*** FEATURED RECIPES – Provided by AgriMissouri™**

Many Missouri farmers' markets opened earlier this month or are opening soon. This month's AgriMissouri™ recipe is about one of the first spring vegetables - asparagus. The Pony Express Farmers' Market in St. Joseph offers a full line of recipes and cooking suggestions for asparagus on their Web site. Check it out! Here is a sample of the many ways you can enjoy asparagus:

Springtime and Asparagus - There are lots of ways to prepare this wonderful vegetable - but don't overcook it. Just add fresh butter and season with salt and pepper and you are in heaven. Perhaps, sprinkle a little Parmesan cheese on top for an extra treat. Stove top in a saucepan or steamer: Cook fresh asparagus in a small amount of boiling water until tender. Fresh asparagus will be crisp-tender in 5-8 minutes.

Asparagus for Salads - Looking for nice crispy asparagus for your salads? Steam or boil them so that they are a bright green color, plunge them into cold ice water dropping their cooking temperature down quickly. This will stop the cooking process that tends to make the asparagus spongy. They will remain crispy and delicious in your wonderful garden fresh salads.

Frying Pan - Place a strip of folded aluminum on the bottom and up the sides of the pan, extending over the edges. Bring water to a boil; add asparagus spears and cook, uncovered, until crisp-tender, 3-5 minutes. Use foil strips to gently lift the spears to a serving dish.

Microwave - Place one pound in a microwaveable baking dish or serving bowl. If cooking whole spears, arrange with tips in center. Add about 1/4 cup water and cover tightly. Microwave at 100% power for 4-7 minutes for spears, 3-5 minutes for cuts and tips. Stir or turn halfway through cooking time.

Roasting - Preheat oven to 475° F. Place the asparagus in a shallow roasting pan or baking sheet in one layer. Sprinkle with the garlic, salt and pepper. Drizzle with oil. Roast until tender and lightly browned, about 20 minutes, depending on age and size, turning occasionally with tongs. These may be served immediately or at room temperature. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese before serving.

Freezing Asparagus - Yes, you can freeze asparagus and the taste when cooked is almost like

the fresh asparagus that is available during the spring. Fill up a large pot with water and add about 1 teaspoon of salt. Bring the pot to a boil and place your washed asparagus in the boiling water for about 3 minutes. Then carefully remove the asparagus and plunge them into a pot of ice water to quickly cool them - they should be a brilliant green color. When they are completely cold, drain the asparagus and pat dry with some paper towels. Put the dried asparagus into freezer bags and into your freezer.

To learn more great recipes or to locate a farmers' market near you, visit the [Farmers' Market Directory](#) or the [Missouri Farmers' Market Blog](#).

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*** WEEKLY MISSOURI WEIGHTED AVERAGE FEEDER CATTLE REPORT**

(April 25, 2008 - *Receipts: 32,527, week ago 37,808, year ago 30,746*)

Published by MDA's Ag Business Development Division – Market News Program

Compared to last week, steers under 600 lbs 2.00 to 3.00 lower, over 600 lbs 2.00 to 5.00 higher, heifers 1.00 to 4.00 higher, Holstein steers steady to 5.00 higher. Demand moderate to good, supply moderate. The stocker trade is starting to tail off as most backgrounders seem to have already filled their pastures. Yearling feeders were the ticket this week, as Korea announced that they will soon be importing beef from the United States, along with higher direct slaughter cattle, and higher boxed beef prices gave optimism to cattle feeders. The steer/heifer price spread had widened the last few weeks and this week buyers took notice and worked at narrowing the spread. Corn planters still, for the most part, parked in the shed as rain fell over most of the state and prevented grain farmers from planting. Several complete dispersals again at the cow auctions this week as producers not only are cutting back on the fertilization of pastures, but are reducing the number of cows that they are running on those acres. Demand for the replacement cows has started to dwindle, as some short bred cows are bringing little more the slaughter cow price, but cow/calf pairs are finding new homes with little trouble. Direct slaughter cattle trade 2.00 to 2.50 higher with cash prices 92.00 to 93.00, and dressed sales from 148.00 to 151.00, with most 4.00 higher at 150.00.

--Feeder Steers: Medium and Large 1

300-400 lbs 113.00-134.00 (122.77); 400-500 lbs 111.00-129.00 (119.70)

500-600 lbs 106.00-125.00 (115.82); 600-700 lbs 100.00-119.00 (111.47)

700-800 lbs 94.25-111.75 (103.14); 800-900 lbs 90.75-103.75 (98.86)

--Feeder Heifers: Medium and Large 1

300-400 lbs 99.00-120.00 (108.54); 400-500 lbs 97.00-117.50 (105.66)

500-600 lbs 93.00-113.00 (102.51); 600-700 lbs 90.00-106.75 (99.12)

700-800 lbs 85.25-100.50 (92.18); 800-900 lbs 78.75-93.50

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*** RELATED LINKS**

- **MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE** – Visit www.mda.mo.gov to read the latest agriculture news and events. Also learn more about what the Missouri Department of Agriculture does to help support farmers and producers across the state.
- **AGRIMISSOURI SHOWCASE** – Visit www.agrimissourishowcase.com to hear the latest podcast or read about AgriMissouri products and opportunities.

- **A LOOK AT MISSOURI FARMERS' MARKETS** – Visit www.mofarmersmarket.blogspot.com each day for a complete look at what is going on at farmers' markets in your area.
- **MISSOURI MARKET NEWS** – For up-to-the-minute market information, visit [Missouri Market News](#). Reports are available in html, PDF and mp3 formats. The [Weekly Market Summary](#) is also available online with a free subscription. For more info, call the Market News Hotline at (573) 522-9244.
- **CALENDAR OF EVENTS** – Check out the latest and upcoming events by visiting [MDA's Upcoming Meetings and Events](#).

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